## PROSPECTUS OF A COMPANY TO EXPLOIT TERRITORY IN AMERICA.

80. PROPOSALS of the Undertakers for Setling a Free Port in West-India. 2 *leaves*, sm. 4to., *uncut as issued.*

[*London ? c.* 1687]

PROBABLY UNIQUE. Not in Sabin and no copy in the British Museum. A prospectus of a proposed company to exploit an unspecified territory (called " West-India ") in America. " The undertakers intend to manage the same by a Society to be called and known by the name of the General European Company for West-India." " Wee doe resolve and agree by God's permission to setle a free Port and Trade for all Nations in an Eminent part of West-India, whereunto we are invited by a great and populous Empire."

Subscriptions are to be sent to " Rest Fenner, Bookseller, near the Exchange in Amsterdam." This gives a clue to the date of the prospectus. In 1687 a Canterbury bookseller named Rest Fenner purchased the business of Mercy Browning, of Amsterdam. Rest Fenner appears to have returned to Canterbury very shortly afterwards. This circular, therefore, was almost certainly printed round about 1687. It concludes : " We whose names are hereunto subscribed, do ingadge with, and incorporate our selves into the Society, pursuant to the ends above written." As no names follow, and as nothing seems to be known of the proposed company it would appear that the project came to nothing.

Lewis
Dec. 31, 1941



# PROPOSALS

## Of the Undertakers for ſetling a Free Port in

# WEST-INDIA.

WHereas many and great Advantages have been Reapt by moſt Nations of Europ, from and by the diſcovery of that Rich and ſpatious Country *Weſt-India*, and yet many Rich and valuable Diſcoverys both of profit and place in the ſame, convenient for ſetlement are hitherto unknown and unpoſeſt by Europeans.

Which the Undertakers having been converſant in theſe parts, are ready to demonſtrate when occaſion requires with the advantages, that will acrue to all who ſhall be willing to adventure therein, either in perſon or purſe.

And for the publick and univerſal Improvement of the ſaid Advantages in this and time to come, the Undertakers intend to manage the ſame by a Society to be called and known by the name of the general European Company for *Weſt-India*.

And for the more free and eaſie management of this great and good undertaking, the Company do declare, that they will ſetle a free Port and Trade upon ſome convenient place in the ſaid Countries, for the Seat of Commerce between that and Europe, as well as other parts of the World.

And ſince every man ought to be informed of the particular Advantages, before Adventure be made, none are obliged to ſubſcribe any ſum upon their Admiſſion into this Company, but the terms of ſuch Admiſſion ſhall only be ſubſcribing to the Conditions upon the Roll here underwritten.

And he who is admitted in manner aforeſaid, ſhall ever after by himſelf, or Deputy, be duely informed of all the ſucceeding undertakings, and have vot and ſhare in the ſame ſuteable to

his Adventure, which is not to exceed ten thouſand Gilders in principale ſtock for any one man at any time for the firſt three years.

And the ſame Company do reſolve from time to time, to defray all and every part of the Charge of their ſeveral undertakings by their joynt conſent and common ſtocke.

And as it may be neceſſary for the ſaid Society in time to come in ſome particular undertakings to make their Application to the High and Mighty States, and other Governments of Europe, as well as particular perſons, ſo this as all other things, ſhall be done, as need require, by adviſe of the Company, and Charge of the Common ſtock.

The Company think fit at preſent only to give this general account of things and publick Invitation for perſons to ſubſcribe reſerving the ſecrets of Trade, and the Company to the aſſembly, or ſuch as they ſhall order from time to time.

Thoſe that are willing to enter into this Society, but would conceal their names for a time, may enter, or cauſe to be enterd what other name they pleaſe, and take a note from the Steward, to ſignify, that ſuch name is only in truſt for him provided, alway that ſuch notes of Truſt ſhall be produced, and the right Names enterd when the Aſſembly ſhall pleaſe to order it, leaſt by ſuch means one, or a few perſons under ſeveral names ſhould engroſe to themſelves too great an intereſt in this undertaking.

The Members who have already ſubſcribed, have choſen and appointed *Reſt Fenner*, Bookſeller, near the Exchange in Amſterdam, being one of the Company, the preſent Steward to keep the Rolle, and take Subſcriptions until the meeting of the Aſſembly.

All the perſons who live at a diſtance from Amſterdam, may ſend their Order in writting to any Friend, to doe it for them; but ſuch Orders muſt be filled up for the warrant of every one who ſubſcribes for his Friend; and ſuch Reſolutions of the Company as are needful to be made publick, ſhall be given in the Courants or by other publick Notice from time to time.

The Underwritten is the Copy of the Rolle for Subſcription.

Whereas the Freedom and Liberty of the Worſhip of God, according to the holy Scriptures, is the firſt and moſt deſirable thing, and in the next place the Security of the Liberty, and property of the perſons and Eſtates of every man to him and his poſterity ſo far as humane prudence can extend it ſelf for the common good of mankind ought to be preſerved; Wee therefore doe reſolve and agree by Gods permiſſion to ſetle a free Port and Trade for all Nations in an Eminent part of *Weſt-India*, whereunto we are invited by a great and populous Empire, where we ſhall not only by the Divine Aſſiſtance be capable of promoting the true Worſhip of God, but alſo of enriching our ſelves, and all that ſhall be concerned wirh us, and therefore We propoſe to our own and all other Chriſtian Nations, who are deſirous to joyn in ſo glorious and great an undertaking to incorporate with us; reſolving to give and allow equal Priviledges and Advantages to all, according to their Merits. And becauſe ſo great an undertaking cannot be effectually carried on without the concurrence of many perſons of ability and Subſtance, We do reſolve and agree that when we have received the Subſcriptions of Seventy perſons to this undertaking, a general meeting ſhall be appointed and held, where the whole Affair ſhall then be debated, and ſuch Officers, both Military and Civil as may ſeem convenient, ſhall be ſetled with the methods for effecting this great glorious and advantageous Affair, which we queſtion not but God that hath inſpired us in the undertaking, will bleſs and proſper to the accompliſhing thereof; but in regard all things are intended to be managed by a Comon Stock, and the Advantages deſtributed according to the Quantum of every perſons ſubſcription, whieh cannot be brought to the deſired perfection, without ſome preſent Charge. It is therefore agreed that every Subcriber ſhall depoſite the ſum of twenty Gilders upon his Subſcription, to be imployed for and towards the neceſſary charge of the promoting and obtaining the Subſcriptions, and meeting of the ſaid Aſſembly of Seventy, to whom affair and juſt Account shall be given at their meeting, and then the Remainder of that Money and all ſuch Sums as ſhall then and after be

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ſubſcribed, ſhall be ordered and diſpoſed as they and future Subſcribers ſhall agree upon and direct from time to time.

Whe whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, do ingadge with, and iucorporate our ſelves into the Society purſuant to the Ends above written.